



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

July 6, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR: A.I.S., Inc.
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 Bonus Year

This memo is to inform observers of the recent updates to the bonus program. Observers were mailed a memo in May of this year explaining a couple of changes that were implemented to our bonus system. The bonus will now be calculated on a quarterly basis, rather than on a yearly basis. The bonus will continue to be paid out on a yearly basis. The 4 quarters this bonus year are:

Quarter 1 – April 1st through June 30th 2007
Quarter 2 – July 1st through September 30th 2007
Quarter 3 – October 1st through December 31st 2007
Quarter 4 – January 1st through March 31st 2008

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for the bonus, observers will have to maintain a minimum of 36 sea days per quarter. These days are pulled from obscon and may be different than the days calculated by your employer. FSB defines a sea day as: *the vessel needs to be on the water for 6 hours or more in a day or the gear touches the water (set/hailed/washed) in a day*. For example, if the vessel left at 22:00 on 01/09/07 (gear was not set until following day) and lands at 14:30 on 01/11/07 then the observer earned 2 sea days. Aborted trips \geq 6 hours will count towards an observer's eligible days but not their payout days. Aborted trips $<$ 6 hours will not count towards an observer's eligible or payout days. Industry funded scallop trips and FSB days are counted for assessing eligibility, however FSB does not pay a bonus for industry funded scallop trips since the industry pays for these sea days. Attendance at required trainings, cooperative research days, and surveys that are scheduled by FSB are also counted towards eligibility days but not payout days. Pre-Probation trips are counted towards both an observer's eligible and payout days. Probation trips are counted towards observers' eligible days, but not their payout days. Additionally, observers that were decertified based on data quality reasons, or violating the Standards of Conduct, will not receive a bonus at all for the given bonus year.

CATEGORY I. DATA QUALITY

After each trip, a Data Quality Sheet (included in packet) will be filled out by FSB. The total number of points an observer can earn on this sheet is 80 points. These 80 points are broken down as follows:

Element 1 - Obscon Criteria (10 points)

Element 2 - Completeness and formatting (20 points)

Element 3 - Sampling and protocols (50 points)

In the top right hand corner of this sheet there is a box that says *Points Earned* where the observer's points will be circled. Observers can receive either the full points for each element or none of the points (i.e., for Element 1, Obscon Criteria, you may earn 10 points or 0 points, for Element 2 you may earn 20 points or 0 points, etc.). At the completion of the quarter, the points will be added up in the Data Quality Section, and divided by the number of trips. Once a month a copy of your Data Quality Sheets will be e-mailed to you (or mailed if you don't have e-mail).

CATEGORY II. COMMUNICATIONS

Ten points of the bonus will be based on communications. The 10 points for communications are based on 5 elements:

Element 1 - Communication with Editors (2 points)

Element 2 - Communication with NMFS staff (2 points)

Element 3 - Willingness to Improve Data (2 points)

Element 4 - Overall Progress in Data Collection/Quality (2 points)

Element 5 - Overall Attitude (2 points)

Each element is worth up to 2 points. The observer will be assigned a 0, 1 or 2 for each element. The total number of points (potential of 10) will be summed for the quarter and added to the total score.

CATEGORY III. FIELD PERFORMANCE

Ten points of the bonus will be based on field performance. The 10 points for field performance are based on 2 elements:

Element 1 - Field Performance (5 points)

Element 2 - Captain's interviews (5 points)

Each element is worth up to 5 points. The total number of points (potential of 10) will be summed for the quarter and added to the total score.

CATEGORY IV. EXTRA CREDIT

A maximum of 5 extra points can be awarded. Justifications for earning extra credit may include: Observer of the Month, bringing in fish for training, coming up with innovative sampling ideas, etc. Extra credit points will also be summed on a quarterly basis and added to the total score. An observer can achieve a total of 105 points per quarter.

The monetary awards will be based on 3 award groups.

Award Group	Points	Monetary Award
A	90.0 – 105.0	\$100 gross per sea day
B	85.0 – 89.9	\$ 50 gross per sea day
C	84.9 or below	No bonus award

For quarters that were not worked in full, the eligibility standard of having to meet 36 days in the quarter would be waived. However, the observed days are still awarded a bonus, if the observer met the required score. For example, if an observer left in January of 2008 (quarter 4) but were here for quarters 1-3, then only quarters 1-3 will be evaluated for eligible days but all days in all quarters would be included in the payout if they met the required points. This rule applies to observers who left sometime during the quarter or became eligible for the bonus sometime during the quarter.

At the end of each quarter, observers will receive an e-mail with any bonus sheets they have not yet received. A hard copy of a letter will be mailed that will indicate how many points out of the 105 possible points were obtained (total score), your achieved award group (award group), how many days were achieved for eligibility (eligible days), and how many days qualified for the bonus award (payout days).

We hope that by instituting these changes we will provide you with more timely feedback on your data quality and field performance status. We hope that this program will enhance data quality by averaging trip scores across the quarter and encourage communication. We do not want observers to be hesitant to describe unusual circumstances during a trip, in fear that their data quality score will be affected – so before you start thinking like that, please let us know.

The bonus working group includes Amy Van Atten, as the Operational Coordinator, KB as the main contact person, Pat Yoos, Mike Tork, and Sara Wetmore. We would be glad to consider an observer-representative to work with the group to receive feedback directly from the observers on their concerns or suggestions on the bonus program. Please speak to your Program Manager if you are interested in acting in such a role.

If you have any questions regarding how the bonus program works, please contact KB McArdle at 508-495-2377 or by e-mail (Katherine.McArdle@noaa.gov). As always thanks so much for your hard work and stay safe.

Attachment:
Data Quality Sheet

Vendor	AIS	EWTS
Funding	Program	Industry

DATA QUALITY/OBSCON

(Worth 80% of your total bonus score)

Points Awarded		
OBSCON	0	10
Comp./Format.	0	20
Samp./Protocols	0	50

Trip Identification	Date Landed		# Days
OBSCON CRITERIA - 10%	NO	YES	EXPLANATION (Continue on back if needed)
1. Was Obscon and Obstacle called in for this trip?			
2. Was the data received on time?			
COMPLETENESS/FORMATting - 20%	NO	YES	EXPLANATION (Continue on back if needed)
1. Are the species on the haul log, length frequency log, and age structure samples all in accordance? Check "NO" if greater than 0.5 fields were wrong per sea day. # days_____ # incorrect fields_____ Avg. per day_____			
2. Were all fields completed when required (and if not, was a comment included)? Check "NO" if greater than 0.3 fields were omitted per page. # pages_____ # incorrect fields_____ Avg. per pg_____			
3. Were all fields recorded correctly and in the proper format (and if not, was a comment included)? Check "NO" if greater than 0.3 fields were wrong per page. # pages_____ # incorrect fields_____ Avg. per pg_____			
SAMPLING/PROTOCOLS- 50%	NO	YES	EXPLANATION (Continue on back if needed)
1. Were the six-month questions asked, if required?			
2. Were all logs included and were all the appropriate logs used (including all required reporting logs)?			
3. Were all hauls observed correctly, as required?			
4. Were the appropriate samples collected for fish crustaceans, and shellfish (including weights, lengths, sex, samples, etc.)?			
5. Were the appropriate samples collected for incidental takes (minium sampling requirements and biological samples)?			
6. Were there othe unacceptable or outstanding errors?			